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OF LABOR UNIONS IN ENTERPRISE MANAGEMENT

- North Vietnam -

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FOREWORD

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PROGRESS IN THE COMPETITIVE PRODUCTION MOVEMENT AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS
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- North Vietnam -

Following is a translation of an unsigned article in the Vietnamese-language newspaper Lao-dong (Workers), Hanoi, No. 715, 3 March 1960, page 3.

According to the reports of the Planning Committee, the Ministries, and different industries, the government plan for 1959 is the heaviest in the three-year plan (basic construction work is twice as much as that of 1958; the volume of railroad transportation has the same ratio; the total output of the industries belonging to the Public Works Ministry increased 141 percent; progresses in trade, culture, education and welfare are also more impressive than in 1958).

Notwithstanding the existing difficulties in production management and in material supply; notwithstanding the technical limitations of our workers, etc., the competitive movement launched in 1959 has flourished incessantly. Popular thinking has been constructively transformed, party leadership has reached deep into all walks of life, and labor unions have discharged their responsibilities in accordance with labor laws (this was particularly clear in the movement for improving enterprise management).

All enterprises in production and industrialization lines, all trades, transportation services, postal services and all regional industrial development projects have completed the 1959 plan at least 7 days, and at most 100 days ahead of schedule. The group of mine explorers in Cho Dien set a commendable record by completing the three-year plan 401 days ahead of the deadline. The large and important enterprises such as the textile factories in Nam Dinh, the coal mines in Hon Gay, Cam Pha, and the cement factories in Haiphong, have also fulfilled their missions despite all difficulties in the search for natural resources, all limitations in equipment, and all calamitous effects of weather.

The enterprises in the public sector are beginning to develop a new pattern of production. They are adopting the competitive movement based on the new attitude and the ownership consciousness of workers. Many enterprises have succeeded in organizing a systematic production in line with government plans, and in tempo with the competitive movement of workers (take the

example of the leather industry in Thuy Khe and the brickfields in Dai La).

In the field of administration, the eagerness of public servants to fulfill government plans has also accelerated progresses. The medical and educational services have gone beyond the pre-determined objectives. The pharmaceutical branch of the medical service completed the annual plan right on 6 October. The problem of forming medical agents and establishing medical care in villages has been successfully solved. Members of the educational service, on their part, have initiated the self-education method, laid the base for the socialist system of nursery and elementary schools, improved teaching procedures, and increased the number of students. Everywhere the education movement is pushed forward and it is only just to say that the results of such a movement depend greatly on the efforts and the perseverance of teachers at all levels.

In addition to fulfilling government plans, our public servants have, throughout the year 1959, embarked on other secondary undertakings to help farmers in the agricultural production movement, or to finish other labor-requiring tasks on Sundays.

Following is some characteristics of the competitive production movement in 1959.

1. The movement is relatively well-developed and continuous

In assessing the general movement we find that beginning with the first quarter of 1959, the propagation of the government's 14th resolution, together with political indoctrination, has not only kept alive the popular competitive spirit which burgeoned in the fourth quarter of 1958, but also has animated it in constant development. This assessment is based on certain popular manifestations such as the protestation against the Phu Loi massacre in South Vietnam, and the response to party appeals in all localities. Furthermore, concrete examples are rife. Certain units of the railroad and highway transportation services achieved their mission thirty nine days ahead of schedule. Out of 40 enterprises belonging to the Public Works Ministry, 25 overfulfilled their quotas. The large enterprises, unfortunately, did not achieve their plans. Nevertheless, in the first three months of 1959, the average output of all industries under the Public Works Ministry did increase 18.9% over the output in the fourth quarter of 1958, the period in which the competitive production movement was in full swing. In the first quarter of 1959 alone, the construction service liquidated a volume of work three times as much as that of the first three quarters of 1958 combined, and twice as much as that

of the last quarter. We must note that meanwhile the increase of personnel was negligible.

The competitive production movement became strong and fruitful ever since the program of new industrial management was launched. Besides the planned mission, all working units have accomplished other important tasks! Many units completed the first semester plan in 100 days -- the case of unit 304 in Tuyen Quang -- or in four months as in the case of the transportation corporation in Thanh Hoa.

The competitive movement continued its development in the third and fourth quarters of 1959. Its effects are seen in the fact that throughout the third quarter, the construction service finished 95% of its works -- a volume three times greater than in the same period of 1958 -- in spite of continual and crushing rain. As the year drew near its end, the movement reached its strongest phase and produced new records of accomplishments (safety match packing which had averaged 2,100 to 2,650 boxes a day, soared up to 4,200, even to 4,800 boxes a day; cement packing which had averaged 40 tons a month, attained a new record of 100 or even 130 tons, etc.). The larger industries, though beset with difficulties, also succeeded in fulfilling their plans.

2. The competitive movement has given birth to new initiatives, improved labor organization, and become popular

To insure the development of the competitive production movement according to its principles of encouraging new ideas, new thinking and new actions, many propaganda techniques have been adopted.

Since the beginning of the year, the great accomplishments of the masses have been hailed and proclaimed in the exhibitions organized at working places (at the mines, the farms, in the factories, hospitals, schools), or in different localities (as in Hanoi, Haiphong, Vinh...). These exhibitions did stimulate workers to invent new techniques, reorganize labor, in the hope of increasing output and improving the quality of products. Many localities went further in establishing channels of information between various working units, or in organizing demonstrations (the demonstration of looming and weaving techniques by Korean professionals at Nam Dinh textile factories). The new spirit and the eagerness of workers inspired by the movement are incessantly reinforced. During the first 8 months of 1959, workers in the Hanoi electric power plant provided 223 inventions leading to many improvements. Likewise, the railroad workers presented throughout the year 458 verified inventions that called for awards.

Popular inventions include the common ones as well as those having high scientific value. The so-called common inventions deal with budgeting time for each individual worker, each working cell and each working unit. They contribute greatly to increasing production output and underlining the group behavior in the socialist system.

3. The competitive production movement has stressed popular socialist thinking and emphasized the role of working cells in their self-administration

In the foregoing we have seen the development of the competitive production movement in its various forms. But the most important part of the movement is the competition between working cells, a competition which is widespread and bound to speed up progresses. In the public sector of industries, the competitive movement between working cells is more fruitful, particularly after the program of improving enterprise management had been launched and new producing cells has been organized. Each cell has an objective, a function, and a division of labor according to which workers can aid and control each other so as to facilitate the accomplishment of the cell's mission. It is owing to the activities of these working cells that the masses have recognized the importance of previous experiences in solving the ambiguity of thinking and the difficulties of family life, etc. Between working cells, the competition has become intensive and constructive. In the field of production as well as in other daily tasks, each individual, each cell has progressive objectives compatible with the capacities to insure success. The competition in the safety match plants and in the timber depots has demonstrated clearly the importance of the in-group competitive spirit so characteristic of the socialist system.

The results of the competition between working cells are also noted in other services: the self-appraisal movement in the postal service, the mutual responsibility program in trade, the mutual aid procedure in the railroad service, the common salary drive in the medical service, and the rotation of jobs in the banks. In the education service, progresses are no less important. The application of initiative records, lecture preparation records, opinion polls, and group discussions have uplifted the sense of responsibility among teachers and swung the service forward.

The characteristics cited above are also the advancing steps of the competitive production movement in 1959. These progresses are products of political indoctrination, and results of the understanding that government is by the people. A strong sense of responsibility has permeated into each individual, each

working cell, each working unit. It has manifested itself in periods of difficulties. It has driven the people to work untiringly to fulfill the assigned missions.

The accomplishments of the competitive production movement are great, but the weaknesses and gaps are still considerable. For example, the movement has not been developed harmoniously, and waste and corruption have not been vigorously eliminated. There are two factors responsible for these weaknesses. In the first place, we must understand that we cannot expect too much from the masses at the beginning of any movement. In the second place, we must recognize that party leadership itself is catching up with new principles. Party leadership is the main road to success, but in the movement to improve industrial enterprise management the party is no less than the masses, a tyro in a renovation.

We must re-appraise the role and the responsibility of labor unions in the enterprise management program, for such reappraisal constitutes one of the most important factors in evolution and renovation, and one of the most important steps in achieving government plans.

As we know, labor laws define hierarchical organization and uphold party leadership in all aspects of our national economy. Once promulgated, these laws inspire confidence in workers and officials, for their basic tenet is to materialize the popular ownership consciousness of all workers and cadres in any enterprise, public or private, and in any organs.

But laws do not insure that every problem will be solved. Among our cadres there are yet many conflicting ideas we must erase before conditions could be created for the laws to establish themselves. Moreover, we must solve many questions relative to organization and sow new ideas. The movement to improve industrial enterprise management has laid the groundwork for a new system: "Managers are responsible for the supervision of the enterprises under the leadership of party representatives while workers and cadres participate in the management." Until now this system has been realized in all public industries, though difficulties encountered are not small. On the other hand, the ownership consciousness of workers and cadres has been developed; labor enthusiasm has been rising; union cadres and workers have conceived definitely the responsibilities and the role of their organization, and for that matter, have multiplied union activities and thrown the union into the movement to improve enterprise management according to labor laws. In recent months this effort of labor unions has advanced the competitive production movement greatly. The outstanding advance of all enterprises which have participated in the movement needs not be over-emphasized. On the basis of political indoctrination, thinking

has been unified, the direct contribution to enterprise management by workers has been increased. Furthermore, the discussions with managers have given the appearance that workers are in possession of the enterprises.

In fact, during the conferences between labor and management, workers analyzed effectively the reports by managers, and criticized constructively the role of managers as well as that of other agents responsible for production. At the same time, workers assessed their responsibilities; discussed their missions and the objectives of their assignment; envisaged the measures to improve organization; ameliorated techniques, and revised administration. Workers have also crystallized their suggestions into resolutions dealing with the betterment of their daily life.

In order to realize government plans progressively and surely, workers have suggested thousands of new ideas concerning techniques, management and regulations. They have solved themselves all difficulties in material supply, in the shortage of equipment, in rationalizing organization, and in modernization.

The activities of producing cells alone are enough to overcome difficulties at the cell or group level. Only the problems germane to a general policy, or to enterprise management could call for a conference of all workers and managers in an industry. The new producing cells are created on the basis of self-administration. Though all of them fumbled at the beginning, many did manage to present a record of achievement in terms of fulfilling quotas, rationally employing labor, and judiciously using equipment. In general, production has been increased, both quality and quantity of products have been improved, unity and mutual help between producing cells have been emphasized.

We can say that the activities of new producing cells along with periodical labor-management conferences are the surest safeguards of democratic life in all industrial and agricultural production establishments. Under party leadership, labor unions have educated workers in observing labor laws. Meanwhile, new principles of management have enlightened workers in organizing new producing cells, and contributing ideas to the formulation of new plans. Originating from workers, the same principles also served as guidelines for managers to deal with the problems of production, or the problems in the material and spiritual daily life of the working class.

Labor unions have coordinated with technical agents at all levels in the execution of all resolutions voted in the conferences between labor and management. Unions have also urged workers to execute these resolutions with all their efforts. Labor unions have proved to be a linking chain between the party and the people, a strong support of the government in carrying out the industrial policies of the party.

The general situation denotes that through concrete activities workers and cadres conceive more clearly the role and responsibility of labor unions, and adhere themselves more closely to such organizations. And that is an important result.

Now we must continue the consolidation and improvement of the new enterprise management system based on three principles set forth by the party. Only when that new system functions could we expect to perform our duty in conformity with labor laws. We must bear in mind that despite all basic progressive accomplishments, we still have to face a welter of problems. For example, we have not defined the relationship between labor union cells and the newly organized working cells; our cadres have not grasped the existing regulations and promulgated policies; the capacity for management and administration of workers and cadres alike leaves much to be desired, let alone the obstacles in production lines.

In the present period of industrialization, the labor union is the main instrumentality through which the party implements new projects, develops new approaches, indoctrinates the masses, leads the masses in eradicating the bourgeois class, and realizes many concrete economic policies such as pricing, forming and allocating capitals among various economic sectors, setting interest rates and organizing works. Labor unions have determined the production situation of the enterprises: after the transfer of all industries into the public sector, unions have instilled in workers a new attitude, developed in them a new urge to work, to improve, and to advance production.

For all that, we still have to solve many difficulties created by the newly established industries. These difficulties include the relationship between the government and enterprises, especially in the questions of planning, material resources supply, consumption of produced goods, taxes, and expansion. In addition, we have to define the relationship between the party and technicians and workers, so that in the new situation all efforts could be channelled into managing industrial enterprises.

As to labor unions, provisions must be made to inculcate in workers the principles of socialism and public ownership, to form and improve cadres, to develop individual capacities to the fullest extent, and in short, to enlarge the role and responsibility of workers in accordance with labor laws. Important too, is the continuation of the role of labor unions in re-educating and eliminating the bourgeois class.

In all governmental services, especially in the educational and medical services, labor unions have glorified labor laws, guided workers in constructively criticizing the management, in developing democratic ideas, in self-educating and self-appraising. It was the unions' activities that land

the competitive production movement in the afore-mentioned successes.

But all in all, much more must be done. Through exhaustive studies and experiences accumulated in hospitals, schools, we have seen that each organ, each service must have its own approach such as to suit its specific situation. Only in that way could we expect workers to feed on their fervent enthusiasm for works and their strong desire for self-improvement.

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